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ABSTRACT

A study explored the attitudes of professors of advertising toward well-known advertising practitioners, and the effect these famous practitioners have had on the teaching of advertising. Four influential and famous advertising practitioners were selected from a preliminary list of 10. Six statements reflecting each practitioner's advertising philosophy were then refined. The 24 statements were randomly ordered and placed on a questionnaire mailed to all members of the advertising division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The 75 respondents indicated on a four-point scale the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The results indicated that the philosophies of William Bernbach and Leo Burnett were the most widely accepted, that of Rosser Reeves was somewhat less popular, and that of David Ogilvy was not well received. The rank order of these famous practitioners did not change when correlated with the subject's number of years of teaching experience, although those with more experience exhibited more favorable attitudes toward Reeves and Ogilvy. By inference, these attitudes reveal what professors are saying to their students about advertising matters. (The scale used in the study is included in the paper.) (HTH)

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THE ATTITUDES OF ADVERTISING EDUCATORS CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHIES OF LEGENDARY ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS

(and their implications for advertising education)

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Introduction

Advertising educators occupy a middle ground between teaching the subject matter as an academic discipline and preparing students for professional work in the field. It is not surprising that the literature to which students are exposed runs the gamut from highly theoretical (such as consumer behavior models) through the eminently practical (such as studying successful case histories). Most courses in advertising reveal a mixture of these two distinct, but related, types of literature. This is probably most true of the advertising principles course but, to a lesser extent, is true of most courses in the advertising curricula. In courses that deal with the social effects of advertising, the non-theoretical component is often composed of books by present and former advertising practitioners that are critical of both the institution and the trade.[1] However, in most of the courses in the curricula, the non-theoretical component is often comprised of readings from some of the most successful and articulate practitioners. The opinions of these professionals as to how advertising works and how to create effective advertising often find their way into the

professor's lectures as well.

Research has seldom focused on the contribution by these advertising "greats" in advertising education. Nor has it clearly established the attitudes professors have regarding these practitioners. The purpose of this research is to focus attention on the attitudes professors of advertising have concerning these well-known practitioners and, indirectly, to ascertain what effects these famous practitioners have had on the teaching of advertising (especially in the principles course and, to a lesser extent, other courses such as creative).

Literature Review

A computer-aided literature review from 1973 to the present reveals a large number of articles that deal with advertising education. The largest cluster of these involves the opinions and suggestions of professors concerning the effective teaching of advertising. The next largest group of articles is written by professionals who assess the state of advertising education and offer suggestions for improvement. A variety of other articles is present but none deal directly with the attitudes advertising educators have regarding the philosophies of famous advertising practitioners and the concommitant effect this may have on what they teach. Even though the literature review was

barren in direct bearing on the topic of interest, it was suggestive and helpful in ascertaining which famous practitioners should be the focus of this study (as explained below).

Methodology

A preliminary list of 10 of the most influential and famous advertising practitioners of this century was compiled by the research team. The researchers also independently placed telephone calls to 10 prominent and experienced advertising educators and asked their opinions as to which practitioners had the most influence in advertising education. A comparison of the two lists provided a means of delimiting the number of practitioners selected and also an initial method of cross-validation since the names chosen were only those that appeared on both lists. At this point, six practitioners were included: David Ogilvy, Leo Burnett, William Bernbach, Rosser Reeves, Claude Hopkins and John Caples.

The literature review contained books and articles that enabled the researchers to further delimit the list. A recent convention paper, "What Every Advertising Scholar Should Know: the Basic Books of the Discipline," included direct references to five of the six.[2] Bernbach is indirectly mentioned in a number of the books but not directly mentioned because he never authored a

book. Four of these practitioners (Ogilvy, Burnett, Bernbach and Reeves) were singled out for extensive discussion in Aaker and Myers widely-used text, Advertising Management.[3] These same four practitioners receive extensive treatment in Ray's Advertising & Communications Management.[4] These same four are also included in Higgins' The Art of Writing Advertising as well as numerous other places.[5] The combination of the initial list, the polling of professors and the review of the literature combined to narrow the field to four practitioners: David Ogilvy, Leo Burnett, William Bernbach and Rosser Reeves.

Four separate research teams were established to read the writings of each of the "legends" and to extract statements representative of the philosophy of each. For each practitioner an equal number of statements (six) was chosen so comparisons could be made among and between the practitioners. The statements then were pre-tested to sharpen wording and remove ambiguity.

It is admitted that, to some extent, the selection of six statements to reflect a philosophy for each practitioner involves reductionism and oversimplification of the respective philosophies. However, this was necessary to obtain an empirical evaluation and attitudes toward these advertising "legends." In essence, the six statements became the operational definition of the "core philosophy" of each of the practitioners that could be assessed

without revealing the names of the respective practitioners.

These 24 statements were randomly ordered and placed on a questionnaire mailed to all members of the advertising division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). This purposive and nonrandom group was chosen because previous studies have shown that although advertising courses are taught in a wide variety of academic settings the most extensive curricula for the preparation for professional work in the field are found in journalism and communication departments.

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with each statement on a four point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" (strongly agree) through "4" (strongly disagree). Much thought was given to a five point scale with a neutral response category. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages, this was discarded to prevent subjects from taking the "easy answer" and to prevent middling of responses. One control question was included to help gauge the reliability and validity of the instrument. It was a statement with which few or no advertising educators should agree ("You don't have to know the product to write good advertising for it"); it drew the expected overwhelmingly level of disagreement ($\bar{x} = 3.62$). Respondents were also asked their level of education and number of years teaching experience.

The questionnaires were mailed to 135 advertising educators and 75 usable questionnaires were returned by the deadline requested in the cover letter, producing an approximate 56 per cent response rate. No follow-up mailings were made due to the high initial response rate and consideration of funding and time.

Results

Results for each question are given below with a mean score composed from all those responding to the particular question. Attribution of the statement to the philosophy of the "legend" it represents is also given (although not given on the original questionnaire to subjects).

TABLE ONE

SCALE:

1 - Strongly Agree

2 - Agree

3 - Disagree

4 - Strongly Disagree

Mean Score	
2.07	1. The necessary ingredients of copy are warmth, sincerity and insight. (Bernbach)

3.14	2.	The most effective advertising employs the "hard sell." (Reeves)
1.95	3.	Good advertising capitalizes upon the inherent drama that exists in almost every product and service. (Burnett)
3.30	4.	Good copywriters have always resisted the temptation to entertain. (Ogilvy)
2.42	5.	In writing ad copy, it's a good idea to capture the actual words used by good salesmen and executives -- words they use naturally and instinctively to sell their product. (Burnett)
2.06	6.	Trying to measure everything precisely causes advertising people to be too concerned about the facts and not concerned enough with making the facts provocative. (Bernbach)
2.85	7.	Photographs are almost always preferable to artwork in the illustration portion of the ad. (Ogilvy)
1.50	8.	The package of a product is itself a great advertising medium. (Burnett)
2.73	9.	Entertainment value and sex appeal take away from the focus of a product message. (Reeves)
3.34	10.	Always include testimonials in your copy. (Ogilvy)
3.18	11.	Long headlines sell better. (Ogilvy)
3.62	12.	You don't have to know the product to write good advertising for it. (Control)
1.93	13.	If the product does not meet some existing desire or need of the consumer, the advertising will ultimately fail. (Reeves)
2.68	14.	Advertising full of facts and information leads to higher product sales. (Ogilvy)

2.65 15. The consumer remembers only one thing about an ad. (Reeves)

2.15 16. Each advertising campaign must have a unique selling proposition. (Reeves)

1.86 17. The best advertising comes from the teamwork and collaboration of an artist and copywriter. (Bernbach)

2.12 18. Although the basic appeal of good advertising must be based in emotional motives, the advertisement must enable the customer to "rationalize" his purchase. (Burnett)

2.37 19. Too frequent change of an advertising campaign destroys penetration; a great campaign will never wear itself out. (Reeves)

1.97 20. Be fresh and original in advertising. As soon as you become a slave to the rules you're doing what everybody else does and you don't stand out. (Bernbach)

2.18 21. All great advertising writing is always deceptively and disarmingly simple. (Burnett)

2.19 22. Tell as much of the story as possible in pictures. (Burnett)

1.52 23. In an advertisement, every word, every graphic symbol, every shadow, should further the message you're trying to convey. (Bernbach)

2.93 24. What you say is more important than how you say it. (Ogilvy)

1.93 25. Humor is often a useful element of an ad. (Bernbach)

The next phase of analysis involved ascertaining which practitioner philosophies as a whole advertising educators were most in

agreement. This involved clustering the six statements for each practitioner and obtaining a composite mean which indicates the over-all level of agreement with each "legend's" philosophy.

Bernbach and Burnett's philosophies are most accepted, Reeve's philosophy is somewhat less popular, while Ogilvy's is not as well received.

Bernbach ($\bar{x}$ = 1.99) and Burnett's ($\bar{x}$ = 2.06) clustered mean scores are almost identical. Of all 25 questions asked, agreement was highest for their statements concerning the "unity of purpose" of an advertisement (Bernbach, Q23, $\bar{x}$=1.52) and the importance of packaging as an advertising medium (Burnett, Q8, $\bar{x}$=1.50).

TABLE TWO

RANK ORDER OF LEGENDS BY CLUSTERED MEAN SCORES

Legend	Questions	Mean Scores
Bernbach	1,6,17,20,23,25	1.99
Burnett	3,5,8,18,21,22	2.06
Reeves	2,9,13,15,16,19	2.50
Ogilvy	4,7,10,11,14,24	3.04

Over-all agreement with Reeves' philosophy borders on neutrality. However, this obscures great dispersion among mean scores

(from $\bar{x}$=1.93 to $\bar{x}$=3.14) to individual questions. Strong agreement exists with his statements concerning products filling existing needs (Q13, $\bar{x}$=1.93), advertising having unique selling propositions (Q16, $\bar{x}$=2.15), and infrequent changes in ad campaigns (Q19, $\bar{x}$=2.37). College professors are in less agreement with his statements concerning consumer recall (Q15, $\bar{x}$=2.65), usefulness of entertainment and sex appeal in advertising (Q19, $\bar{x}$=2.73), and his position on the effectiveness of the "hard sell" (Q2, $\bar{x}$=3.14).

Finally, Ogilvy's individual statements were the least widely accepted; hence, the over-all rating of his philosophy was rated least favorable of the four "legends." All statements had means higher than 2.50 with the greatest amount of disagreement occurring over long headlines (Q11, $\bar{x}$=3.18), good copywriting and entertainment (Q4, $\bar{x}$=3.30) and the use of testimonials (Q10, $\bar{x}$=3.34).

The third phase of analysis involved ascertaining whether there were significant differences in the ranking of "legends" when education and/or experience of the professors was taken into account. First, can differences in agreement be attributed to a college professor's number of years of teaching experience? Professors were grouped in clusters ranging from "1 - 5 years of experience" through "over 20 years of experience." The rank order of the legends did not change when analyzed by professors

experience. An analysis of variance revealed over-all significant differences among educational groups concerning the philosophies of Reeves ($F=3.218$, $p < .01$) and Ogilvy ($F=2.42$, $p < .05$). In other words, although professors with more experience rank ordered the four practitioners identically, those professors exhibited more favorable attitudes toward Reeves and Ogilvy to a significant extent. There were no significant differences regarding Bernbach or Burnett by years of teaching experience.

TABLE THREE

AGREEMENT WITH LEGENDS' PHILOSOPHIES BY YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Legend	Bernbach	Burnett	Reeves	Ogilvy
F ratio	.81	.94	3.21*	2.42*
Prob.	.38	.44	.01	.05

* Statistically significant

Analysis of results by education of professors revealed no statistically significant results. This may, in part or in whole, be due to the fact that most professors clustered at the upper end of the educational continuum and this lack of variance precluded any successful analysis by education.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, the attitudes of different professors to the individual statements is interesting in its own right and, by inference, explains what professors are saying to their students about these particular matters. When the statements are collapsed into a mean score that reflects the over-all philosophy of each advertising "legend," it reveals that Bernbach and Burnett's philosophies are most favored; attitudes towards Reeves are neutral, though there is wide disagreement concerning different elements of his philosophy. Professors hold decidedly unfavorable attitudes towards Ogilvy's philosophy, perhaps partially due to the dogmatism with which he states it. Although there is no difference in the rank order of the practitioners by professors' years of teaching experience, those with more experience did hold more favorable attitudes toward Reeves and Ogilvy than their younger counterparts. There were no differences by education level of professors.

Since advertising educators in journalism and communications settings are teaching future professionals, these findings have relevance for advertising practice as well.

Follow-up research should involve administration of the

same questionnaire to a wide range of advertising practitioners to ascertain what their attitudes are regarding these statements and their rankings of the "legends." These results could be compared with those included in this study to reveal similarities and differences. The research team has collected this data and results will be forthcoming in future research.

FOOTNOTES

1. Typical of these are Edward Buxton's Promise Them Anything (New York: Stein & Day, 1972), Frederic Wakeman's The Hucksters (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1946) and Nicholas Samstag's Bamboozled (New York: James Heineman, 1966).
2. Leonard Reid, Dean Krugman and J. Thomas Russell, "What Every Advertising Scholar Should Know: the Basic Books of the Discipline," a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Advertising, Denver, Colo., March, 1984.
3. David Aaker and John Myers, Advertising Management (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1982).
4. Michael Ray, Advertising & Communication Management (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1982).
5. Examples of other notation of these individuals are in basic advertising principles texts. For one, S.W. Dunn and Arnold Barban cite these four individuals a total of 17 times in Advertising: Its Role in Modern Marketing (Chicago: Dryden Press, 5th ed., 1982).